

Okay, what is this book? Why does it exist? AVENGERS UNITED--or whatever it's going to be called--is what I'm calling an "introspective action series". (We'll all be sick of hearing that term in a few months, I'm sure.) What does that mean? Well, where MIGHTY and NEW are traditional team books, each issue of AVU presents a matter of emotional resonance to a single character within the larger context of Earth's Mightiest Heroes standing together against major threats.

For example, in this first arc of six issues, which we're tentatively calling "Reborn Again", we have a single villain plot: Onslaught is back and wants to supplant all free will in the universe, and he's decided to manipulate and torment the Avengers into helping him achieve his crazy goal. Now, within that framework, we take different aspects of Onslaught's path and view it from over the shoulder of six different Avengers from the current two teams. This first issue features Ms. Marvel, while #2 will showcase Spider-Woman, and #3 will be from Wasp's POV. And so on.

If any of this sounds kinda wonky to you, give this first issue a read and it should make sense. And feel free to give me a call if you want to discuss any of this.

-Sean

**Page One (5 panels)**

Panel 1. Grab your copy of Civil War #4: in this panel, THOR fires a bolt of lightning from his hammer, blowing a hole through the torso of poor GOLIATH.

TITLE: THEN:

Panel 2. From CW #4: Goliath lies dead in a pile of rubble, smoke billowing up from his chest. SHE-HULK inspects as IRON ARMOR® Brand SPIDER-MAN, IRON MAN and MS. MARVEL look on.

NO COPY

Panel 3. Again, from CW #4: wrapped and chained, Goliath is lowered by cranes into his massive burial plot. It's raining, and several black umbrellas are open.

NO COPY

Panel 4. Not from CW #4, but at the funeral: slight upward angle. TONY STARK stands at the fore of a group of mourners looking down at the grave. The others are CAROL DANVERS, SIMON WILLIAMS (make sure those two stand adjacent to one another) and JANET VAN DYNE, plus a couple others cropped off so all we see is clothes. Stark, with the Band Aid on his left cheek, looks particularly repentant. The weight of the world is on his shoulders. While everyone else is saddened, no one is out of control, including Carol. That last bit is important to the story.

NO COPY

Panel 5. The same shot, except now it's a sunny day and our heroes are in their Avengers costumes, so it's Ms. Marvel, WONDER MAN, Iron Man and WASP. They are shocked and appalled by what they see. The cropped-off people are now SENTRY, ARES and BLACK WIDOW--the rest of the Mighty team. We don't have to see bits of all of them yet; just enough to replace the bodies in the previous panel.

TITLE: NOW:

WASP: My god.

**Page Two (1 panel)**

Panel 1.           A splash from overhead: the Mighty Avengers stand together, looking down upon Goliath/Bill Foster's grave, which has been UNEARTHED AND VACATED FROM WITHIN, knocking the gravestone over so we can see Foster's name upon it.

TITLE & CREDITS:

Sean McKeever and TBD present  
The Avengers in  
REBORN AGAIN  
CHAPTER ONE: AND ALL THAT COULD HAVE BEEN  
*CREDITS*

**Page Three (7 panels)**

Panel 1. Day. An establishing shot of Avengers Tower, an awe-inspiring sight in the heart of Manhattan.

NO COPY

Panel 2. Very close on the top floors of the Tower, where Ms. Marvel looks out at the city, lost in thought, arms folded. She looks a little hurt, like she's thinking of something sad, but only in an abstract, detached sort of way. Behind her, we catch a glimpse of the meeting described in the next panel.

IRON MAN (within): That's it. That's the last of it.

Panel 3. Wide on the main room. The big panel of the page. Wonder Man, Wasp, Ares, Sentry and Black Widow sit around the room, listening to a translucent, life-size, holographic image of Iron Man in the center.

IRON MAN: We've been every place Bill Foster's ever been associated with, and no sign of his--

IRON MAN: Of him.

IRON MAN: Analysis of the gravesite turned up nothing aside from the certainty that the grave **was** in fact disturbed from within.

IRON MAN: Obviously, I don't want to give up on this. Bill was a friend, and...well, if by some miracle he's actually **alive**, I want to do everything I can to **help** him. And if he isn't...

Panel 4. Tight on Iron Man, very serious.

IRON MAN: ...then his earthly remains need to be laid to **rest**.

**Continued...**

**Page Three (cont'd.)**

Panel 5. Now for the last three panels, which are together on the bottom tier of the page. Back to Carol, tighter this time. Her detached sadness has become a little more pronounced. No tears, but she has a lump in her throat.

IRON MAN (off): But for now, we need to focus on other matters.

Panel 6. FLASHBACK.

Rather than do the rounded-corner thing as is traditional, I have another idea, and I really, really, really like it, so please consider it. No borders, the artwork coming up flush to the other, non-flashback panels, and a translucent shadow is dropped along the borders of the non-flashback panels. In other words, it looks as though the flashbacks occur in a whole other layer underneath the comic. So there are these little cutaways to this hidden, lower layer. For this to work, we can't have two flashbacks touching. (See the rough mockup I sent.)

ANYWAY...In this panel, Goliath is lying in rubble much like in Civil War, except this is more of an overhead shot, plus he's in his original costume. There's no hole in his chest, but he is bruised and bloody, his costume torn. This is an event in Los Angeles, back around the time he had his own series.

NO COPY

Panel 7. Tighter on Carol this time. It's not just that she's saddened by this memory of a loving Bill Foster. At the same time, something's nagging at her.

IRON MAN (off): I'm being told I'm late for a S.H.I.E.L.D. briefing. You'll have to excuse me...

**Page Four (8 panels)**

Panel 1. Now we're in the Avengers' gym, where Simon--I'm going to refer to them by their names rather than their code names from here on out--is doing bench presses. This is a tight shot, so we don't quite see the scope of it yet. He's wearing gym clothes. He strains. Ionic energy spits out the corners of his eyes.

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Panel 2. Pull way back to show that this isn't free weights he's using, but some sort of massive counterweight machine fueled by pulsating Kirby-like energy. Carol (in costume) stands to one side.

CAROL: Simon.

Panel 3. Simon gets up from the machine, a gym towel around his neck. Carol looks at Simon, brow furrowed.

SIMON: Hey, beautiful. What's up?

CAROL: Do you know how...?

Panel 4. Focus on Carol. She becomes slightly impatient.

CAROL: Is there a way for us to take the **Quinjet** without anyone knowing we left or where we're headed?

SIMON (off): Uhh...where **are** we headed?

CAROL: Is there?

SIMON (off): The **Iron Man** armor's tied into every single system--

CAROL: I know.

Panel 5. Now to Simon. He looks at Carol like she's strange, possibly treasonous.

CAROL (off): I'm asking if there's a way to **circumvent** all that.

SIMON: Carol...what's this about?

**Continued...**

**Page Four (cont'd.)**

Panel 6.           A shot of both of them, facing each other. Simon tries to get a read on Carol, but she looks down, clearly not yet comfortable to share with him.

NO COPY

Panel 7.           Back to just Simon. Now he's gone from cautious to concerned. We won't come right out with this here, because it's not our bit to run with, but for your information: Simon is quite possibly in love with Carol. At the very least, we can portray them as close friends and leave Simon's true feelings up to the readers to speculate on.

SIMON:                               My agent can get me a private jet. No one would know we're on it.

SIMON:                               But...

Panel 8.           Relieved and thankful for her friend, but yet far from cheery, Carol puts a hand on Simon's chest, looking him in the eye.

CAROL:                               I'll tell you on the way, okay?

**Page Five (6 panels)**

Panel 1. FLASHBACK. Morning in front of a cabin in the California woods. Carol and Goliath, both in their original costumes but no masks, stand at the door. She caresses his cheek. They look at each other with kindness and attraction, but not out-and-out love. They had just shared an intimate night together that they both know is just a night, so this tender goodbye is more sweet than bitter.

NO COPY

Panel 2. NOW. Inside the spacious jet, Simon sits across from Carol--not in the other aisle, but face-to-face like seats in trains. She looks pensively out the jet window as he watches her, wishing he could get into her head. As far as Simon is concerned, they may as well be miles apart right now.

NO COPY

Panel 3. Carol stirs, turning from her self-absorbed gazing to smile slightly. Apologetic, embarrassed, thankful.

CAROL: Sorry, Simon. I'm ignoring you, aren't I?

CAROL: And I owe you an explanation.

Panel 4. Focus on Simon, listening intently.

CAROL (from panel 3): Back when I was editor of *Woman Magazine*, I went to Los Angeles for this big conference on women in journalism.

CAROL: After the first day of sitting in seminars and panels, I was bored out of my mind.

CAROL: I needed to take to the air, find some excitement.

**Continued...**



**Page Five (cont'd.)**

Panel 5. FLASHBACK. A shot from overhead with Carol (original costume) flying in the foreground, catching a skirmish between GRAVITON and Goliath (in the costume he had for his own series). Goliath is charging at Graviton, and there's a fair amount of damage all around. Let's set this at a strip mall parking lot.

NO COPY

Panel 6. NOW. A head shot of Carol. Thinking on that last line, she smiles sentimentally.

CAROL: I didn't know why they were fighting, exactly. I guess I still don't. Goliath--

CAROL: --Bill--

CAROL: What's a guy who can grow to fifty feet going to do against someone who can control gravity **except** get beaten silly?

CAROL: So I did what I could to help.

**Page Six (5 panels)**

Panel 1. FLASHBACK. Graviton drops a few SUVs on Carol, the added gravitational weight crushing the vehicles like soda cans, while Goliath tries to protect himself from chunks of pavement breaking loose from around his feet and sent upward at high velocity.

NO COPY

Panel 2. NOW. Carol gets dark, serious. She's still looking like she's telling it as it comes to her, as opposed to looking at Simon directly and knowingly.

CAROL: It was a joke. Graviton...he was just **toying** with us. We couldn't touch him. Bill was in pretty bad shape.

CAROL: And then...

Panel 3. FLASHBACK. Goliath has thrown a piece of pavement at Graviton, who was distracted by Carol. Graviton gets clocked pretty well. Outside of the gravity power, he's not super tough or anything, so it can't hit him directly or he'd be killed, but it is a pretty serious blow.

NO COPY

Panel 4. NOW. Focus on Simon, engrossed in Carol's story.

CAROL (off): It wasn't quite enough to knock Graviton out, but he knew we had him.

CAROL (off): So, in one last desperate act, he shot Bill up into the air. **Hard.**

Panel 5. Carol thinks back to the urgency and helplessness of that moment.

CAROL: For a second, I was just stunned. I froze. I didn't know what to do.

CAROL: When, really, there was only one thing **to** do.

Panel 6. FLASHBACK. A distance shot. Carol streaks toward Goliath, who wasn't shot straight up but at an angle, so there's an arc between him and Carol, who is still a good ways behind him.

NO COPY

**Page Seven (7 panels)**

Panel 1. FLASHBACK. Carol's reaching out for Goliath, who is face up and unconscious, his arms and head pushed forward from the force of the fall toward the thick California forest below.

NO COPY

Panel 2. NOW. Two shot. Simon looks to Carol, surprised.

SIMON: Wow. I can't believe I never **heard** about this before-- from you **or** Bill. Heck, I can't believe Bill survived it.

CAROL: He almost didn't.

Panel 3. FLASHBACK. Carol has wrapped her arms around one of Goliath's hands, and she tries with all her might to slow their descent, eyes closed tight, straining.

NO COPY

Panel 4. NOW. Simon is confused.

SIMON: Carol...I don't get it. What's this team-up of yours from way back when got to do with **finding** him?

SIMON: I mean, I knew Bill, **Tony** knew Bill...

Panel 5. Carol looks to Simon with an eyebrow raised, feeling uncomfortable, not knowing exactly how to put that they didn't quite know Bill the way she "knew" him.

NO COPY

Panel 6. Back to Simon, who's awkward now. He gets it.

SIMON: Oh.

Panel 7. The jet heads for a small landing strip somewhere near those same California forests.

NO COPY

**Page Eight (6 panels)**

Panel 1. FLASHBACK. Above and behind Carol. She's holding regular-sized Goliath in her arms as she flies about 50 feet over the forest. They're both banged up, but Carol's not in horrible shape. Goliath points ahead to a remote, uninhabited cabin with a small lake/large pond maybe 100 yards beyond it.

NO COPY

Panel 2. NOW. It's late in the day. Near dusk. Close in on the cabin. Carol and Simon stand before it.

SIMON: **This** place was **Bill's**?

CAROL: He called it his **shanty of solitude**.

Panel 3. We're inside now. They enter. The place is immaculate, if a little dusty, and is only lit by sunlight. Carol looks around in a bit of awe. It really brings back the memories.

CAROL: He'd come here when he needed to think about work or...just get away from everything.

Panel 4. Simon walks along the wall, inspecting the antique fishing rods and bear traps and such.

SIMON: This is almost...**anti-Bill**.

SIMON: Even if he **is** alive, why would he come here? Why **this** place?

Panel 5. Over Simon's shoulder. He turns, finding an empty room and an open door to another room.

SIMON: Carol?

Panel 6. We're in the bedroom. Carol stands inside, looking at the made, undisturbed bed.

NO COPY

**Page Nine (6 panels)**

Panel 1. FLASHBACK. Goliath lies on the bed, the top half of his costume off, propped up against the headboard with pillows. Carol bandages his ribs, a first aid kit laid out nearby. They share a laugh over something.

NO COPY

Panel 2. NOW. Tight on Carol, reminiscing. Bittersweet.

NO COPY

Panel 3. FLASHBACK. Close in. The laughter fades. They're more serious, amorous. The moment they both realize they want something from the other.

NO COPY

Panel 4. NOW. Simon stands behind Carol, to one side, but close. Carol doesn't turn back. She's still looking at the bed. Simon's a little cynical.

SIMON: Why didn't you say anything? All this time we've been looking for him, and you never--

CAROL: Because we...we wanted it to be just for us. No one else.

Panel 5. Simon's getting frustrated. This isn't making much sense, plus he's irritable because of his feelings for her.

SIMON: Yeah, but you were **there** when Bill died. You were **at** the funeral. And you felt **bad**, sure, but **certainly** not any more than anyone else.

Panel 6. Carol turns to Simon, getting as annoyed with him as he is with her. He shrugs, feeling kept in the dark.

CAROL: What do you want from me?

SIMON: I'm **trying** to figure this out. How all of a sudden you go from--

SIMON: I don't even **know** from what to what.

**Page Ten (6 panels)**

Panel 1. Carol fumes with righteous anger and frustration over the shit hand she's been dealt.

CAROL: When I lost my memories--when Rogue **stole** them from me? I felt like I had **nothing**. I **was nothing**.

CAROL: Then I got all of it back, but I can't--

CAROL: It's like I'm watching a stranger's home movies! They weren't **mine** anymore, Simon. **None** of them!

Panel 2. Letting petty jealousy get the best of him, Simon becomes more of a dick than he has any right to be over this.

SIMON: That's exactly my point, **Carol**.

SIMON: If your...whatever with **Bill Foster** happened before Rogue wiped your **brain** clean, then **how** in the world are you feeling **anything**--?

Panel 3. Close in. Carol barks at Simon. He's taken aback.

CAROL: **I don't know!**

Panel 4. Focus on Carol now. She cries, letting it all hang out.

CAROL: I don't know, but I **do**! Suddenly I do!

CAROL: And it's **all I've got!**

Panel 5. Carol tents a hand over her eyes to cover up her crying and Simon stands there, feeling stupid.

NO COPY

Panel 6. A tight shot. Simon reaches for Carol's shoulder to console her.

SIMON: Carol, I...

**Page Eleven (7 panels)**

Panel 1. Carol backhands Simon with the arm she was using to cover her eyes. She was basically batting his arm away, but she's emotional and they're superhumans, so she actually winds up smacking him back hard.

CAROL: **Back off!**

Panel 2. Simon smacks hard against the bedroom wall, right next to the open doorway. Bits of wood splinter, but no true structural damage.

SIMON: NNH!

Panel 3. Tight on Carol, speechless. She didn't mean to, but she's not about to apologize.

NO COPY

Panel 4. Then to Simon, also speechless. He can't believe he's hurt his close friend, and that they're at odds like this...

NO COPY

Panel 5. ...so he walks out. Carol watches him go.

NO COPY

Panel 6. Carol sits on the edge of the bed, still kinda stunned with herself at what just happened.

NO COPY

Panel 7. Carol still sits there, thinking, "shit, I just slugged a dear friend." There's a window in view.

NO COPY

**Page Twelve (4 panels)**

Panel 1. Same shot, but bigger. Simon is sent crashing backward through the window, breaking pieces of log off. Carol stands, shocked.

NO COPY

Panel 2. Carol looks to Simon, shocked and concerned, as Simon shakes it off, standing.

CAROL: **Simon?!**

Panel 3. A LARGE FIST crashes down through the roof, pounding Simon into the ground.

NO COPY

Panel 4. A POV shot. We retract our giant fist from the cabin, and inside Simon tries to recover as Carol looks up with fear and disbelief at...

NO COPY



**Page Thirteen (5 panels)**

Panel 1. ...ZOMBIE GOLIATH. Now, I'm sure he wasn't buried wearing his costume and with the hole in his chest, but damnit that's how we're gonna show him, because naked and sewn up just isn't the same.

Zombie Goliath (ZG) isn't a zombie in the truest sense. Sure, he's walking dead, but he has full consciousness. It's just not *his* consciousness. He's fully mobile, emotive and can speak. Right now, he's looking down at us (and Carol and recovering Simon) much like Carol was looking up at him.

It's well into sunset now and should be dusk by the end of page 16.

NO COPY

Panel 2. Tight on ZG. He's shocked, and a little bit relieved.

ZOMBIE GOLIATH: Carol.

ZG: I **knew** you'd come here. I knew it.

Panel 3. Carol throws Simon a look of disbelief, while Simon looks off at ZG with contempt.

ZG (off): Simon...why'd you **attack** me?

CAROL: Simon?

SIMON: He **said** he was going to **kill** you!

Panel 4. Angry, Simon launches himself at ZG's head.

ZG: No, **you** told me to **stay dead**, and then you--

SIMON: **Liar!**

Panel 5. Simon slugs ZG in the face, sending him off balance, breaking trees. It's a powerful hit.

ZG: UHHH!

**Page Fourteen (5 panels)**

Panel 1. A second punch from Simon--an uppercut--takes ZG to the air. He doesn't stand a chance against Simon.

ZG: NNNH!

Panel 2. ZG lands, breaking trees, some bits of tree protruding through his flesh, mildly reminiscent of Civil War and Carol's memory. He's down for the count, but Simon hasn't let it all out yet. He flies toward his fallen foe.

SIMON: Don't know what you think you're **doing**, Bill, but I swear to you I'll--

Panel 3. Carol comes in from behind, locking his arms behind his back. Angry, Simon struggles.

CAROL: **Stop it! You'll kill him!**

SIMON: NN! **Damn** it, Carol, it's not me, it's--

Panel 4. Simon wrests free, elbowing Carol in the process. They're still in midair, by the way.

**SIMON:** **Let go!**

Panel 5. Carol takes Simon's elbow as an act of aggression, and so she slug him across the face. Hard.

SIMON: Carol, I'm s--

**Page Fifteen (5 panels)**

Panel 1. Another hit by Carol. Massive. Thunderous. Simon tries to block it, but she's just too fast and angry.

CAROL: I **love** him, okay?!

Panel 2. And another. This one sends him earthbound. He's not blocking anymore.

CAROL: **I love him!**

Panel 3. Simon slams to the ground, making a small, Simon-shaped crater. He's out.

NO COPY

Panel 4. Above Carol. Simon lies one side, Goliath on the other.

NO COPY

Panel 5. Carol stresses. She just beat up one of her best friends.

ZG (off): Heh...

**Page Sixteen (8 panels)**

Panel 1. A head shot from the side of ZG. He smirks, laughing.

ZG: Heh heh heh.

Panel 2. Carol swoops toward ZG as he picks himself up.

CAROL: It's...it's not funny.

ZG: But it is. You just beat one of your closest friends **half to death**. And you did it over a memory...

Panel 3. Part of Carol wants to laugh, believing this is a joke, but the other half is weirded out.

ZG (off): ...that isn't even **real**.

CAROL: O-of course it's real. We--

Panel 4. FLASHBACK. There's nothing there.

NO COPY

Panel 5. NOW. Carol starts to panic.

CAROL: No.

CAROL: It was **real**!

Panel 6. ZG smiles, amused, as Carol freaks.

CAROL: No. Oh god, no...!

CAROL: W-what did you **do** with it?!

**Continued...**

**Page Sixteen (cont'd.)**

Panel 7. Defeated emotionally, Carol drops to her knees.

CAROL: It was real.

CAROL: It was real...

Panel 8. Back to ZG. His smile is more of a satisfied sneer, reflecting something sinister inside.

ZG: No.

ZG: Not even **close**.

**Page Seventeen (7 panels)**

Panel 1. Night. Moonlit. We don't know where we are yet, except "outside". Carol and Simon are in midair, vertical, held in invisible stasis. Simon is still out cold. Carol weeps. Her thoughts are her own, but she has no control over her mind, so all she can do is let her emotion leak out.

ZG (off): Don't bother fighting it, "Ms. Marvel". You're absolutely **mine** now--same as your dear friend there.

Panel 2. Pull out a little. Zombie Goliath passes them, headed in our direction. He's calm, collected, almost nonchalant. The gaslamp-lit cabin is in the background. We can't tell yet, but we're at that small lake, with our heroes facing it, hovering at ZG's upper-torso level.

ZG (off): So go ahead. Give in. Have a good cry. Embrace your despair while you're still allowed.

Panel 3. ZG stands with his hands clasped behind his back, eyes narrowed in thought.

ZG: Not very long ago, I knew despair. I was falling apart...crumbling away to nothing on the astral plane.

ZG: Then I found this body. This mind. Recently vacated, and vast enough to contain me.

Panel 4. ZG gets in Carol's face, spiteful. Poor Carol, mourning her imaginary memories.

ZG: Do you know what I found when I took this mind? A betrayal. One of you--an **Avenger**--struck down dead **by his own teammates**.

ZG: You don't **deserve** free will. Look at what you do with it. What you **do** deserve...is **suffering**.

**Continued...**

**Page Seventeen (cont'd.)**

Panel 5. Focus on Carol, brow furrowed. She stops weeping to try and figure out who this is.

ZG (off): And not just for Goliath.

ZG (off): For me. For **my** fate. And all that **could** have been.

Panel 6. Behind them all. ZG stands at the water's edge, with Carol and Simon behind him to one side.

ZG: I'll admit; I'm weak in this shell. But it's only temporary.

ZG: I am diminished, but I am not defeated. Not falling. Not giving up.

ZG: Today is the day that I start again. I **will** see my dream accomplished.

Panel 7. Tight on ZG's sinister, sneering face.

ZG: And, in the end...

**Page Eighteen (1 panel)**

Panel 1. We pull way back. Zombie Goliath faces the water, looking to his moonlit, shimmering reflection. But it's not him in the reflection...

...it's ONSLAUGHT.

ZG: ...I will have the Avengers to thank.

TITLE: CONTINUED.